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Towards global partnerships

Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In recent years partnerships between the United Nations and non-State actors, including businesses, foundations and other private-sector organizations, have played an increasingly important role. Partnerships take many forms, ranging from time-bound project partnerships involving a small number of actors, to global initiatives involving a multitude of actors. Partnerships today are an integral part of the work of many United Nations organizations and of particular relevance to those who have the on-the-ground capacities to deliver. Partnerships have the potential to complement the Organization's efforts to achieve its objectives, while at the same time contributing to its renewal by introducing new methods of work. United Nations organizations are still learning how best to utilize the potential benefits of partnerships. Efforts are under way to scale up promising approaches and to learn from experience gained so far. To succeed in this undertaking, Governments and United Nations organizations will need to continue to give encouragement and support to promising approaches and initiatives.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/76 of 11 December 2001, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary General to submit a report to it at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the proposals of modalities for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector.

2. The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector (A/56/323), provided a comprehensive overview of partnership modalities and experiences in the United Nations system. The present report draws and builds upon it and focuses on the United Nations. It reviews some recent developments, including the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to illustrate the variety of partnership arrangements between United Nations entities and the non-State sector, and tries to derive lessons and formulate proposals for meeting the challenges ahead.

3. Increasingly, the international community sees the usefulness of developing partnerships between the United Nations, Governments and non-State actors to help achieve the objectives of the Organization. The focus on partnerships recognizes that bringing the strengths, capacities, approaches, skills and methods of different actors together can create powerful synergies and overcome many of the barriers to sustainable development.

4. In order to increase the ability of the United Nations to pursue the priorities identified in the Millennium Declaration, the General Assembly resolved in the Declaration, inter alia, to give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, in general, to contribute to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes.

5. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 56/76, stressed that efforts to meet the challenges of globalization could benefit from enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector, in order to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all. The resolution underlined the fact that cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector, shall serve the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and make concrete contributions to the realization of the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits and their reviews, in particular in the area of development and the eradication of poverty. It stressed the need for international cooperation to strengthen the participation of enterprises, especially small and medium-scale enterprises, business associations, foundations and NGOs from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular in partnerships with the United Nations system.

6. In its resolution 57/300, the General Assembly decided that the creation of a partnership office as part of the effort to enhance cooperation in the work of the Organization with the private sector, taking into account the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits, should be subject to its resolutions 55/215 of 21 December 2000 and 56/76.

7. The financial needs of the development process, particularly at a time when development funds have lagged behind needs, necessitate a new relationship between Governments and the private sector, which is the primary source of foreign direct investment. Consequently, engagement between Governments and the business sector was a prominent feature of the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002.

8. Further impetus was provided by the development of multistakeholder partnerships as a key innovation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Such partnerships have opened new opportunities and a more inclusive means for the pursuit of agreed objectives. However, the Summit stressed that partnerships are not a substitute for government responsibilities and commitments, but are rather intended to strengthen implementation by involving those who can make a contribution.

II. Definition, concepts and modalities

A. Definition

9. Partnerships are commonly defined as voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both State and non-State, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits. The present report deals with partnerships in which the United Nations has an interest, either as a partner or in the promotion of partnerships that contribute to the objectives of the United Nations.

10. In a successful partnership, all participants contribute and gain something. They all have a stake in the process and the outcome despite the differences in their individual inputs and interests. Agreements between partners may be formal or informal, or a combination of both, but there should be a clear understanding of the objective, the role and the responsibilities of each participant and the commonality, or potential divergence, of their interests.

B. Concepts and modalities

11. There can be various kinds of partnership between the United Nations and private sector organizations. They were described in detail in the aforementioned report of the Secretary-General (A/56/323) and are briefly recapitulated here.

12. Partnerships between the United Nations and non-State actors work on many levels, address many different issues and serve different purposes. They range from participation in the intergovernmental process, as in the tripartite structure of the International Labour Organization, to the consultative status of business associations with the Economic and Social Council, to more recent arrangements such as the Global Environment Facility, the Information and Communication Technology Task Force, global initiatives on specific health issues and the Global Compact.

13. Just as different partnerships serve different ends, their activities can range from global-level, multistakeholder, multi-issue initiatives to local projects involving only one private sector organization. They could be involved in short-term

humanitarian work, such as emergency response, or long-term development and institution-building. Some may have a holistic approach to social, environmental and economic issues; others could be focused on special issues or interest areas. Some United Nations entities may work with a very specific group of private sector actors, while others may have relationships with a wide range of organizations.

14. Most partnership initiatives have one or more of the following purposes:

(a) *Policy dialogue*. Non-State actors' formal or informal participation in intergovernmental deliberations, institutional governance, or normative and standard-setting structures within the United Nations system; or policy dialogue with United Nations entities outside official intergovernmental processes through global policy networks and voluntary initiatives;

(b) *Advocacy*. Cooperation between the United Nations and non-State actors to raise public awareness of and support for United Nations goals and programmes through joint communications, product-licensing and cause-related or social-marketing;

(c) *Mobilizing private funds*. Cooperation to mobilize public and private capital for United Nations programmes and projects or for development, including philanthropic funds or investment capital;

(d) *Information and learning*. Facilitating information-sharing, research and joint learning between the United Nations, Governments and/or non-State actors for building and disseminating knowledge and know-how on critical development issues and methodologies;

(e) *Operational delivery*. Collaborating on joint programme and project design, implementation and evaluation, and mobilization of financial, in-kind, technical or managerial resources;

(f) *Partnership promotion*. Actions by United Nations organizations to encourage, foster and facilitate the development of partnerships that help to achieve United Nations objectives.

15. Many successful partnerships between the United Nations and non-State actors are focused on only one type of activity. Others, such as some of the partnership initiatives associated with the World Summit on Sustainable Development, combine several activities. The latter, more strategic approach enables partnerships to increase the impact and sustainability of their work by simultaneously developing effective policy frameworks, mobilizing funding and developing synergistic multistakeholder strategies for operational delivery on the ground.

III. Recent developments

16. United Nations organizations are building up their internal capacities to develop partnerships and continue to experiment with new approaches. Indeed, partnership approaches are increasingly becoming an integral part of the United Nations activities. For example, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as well as entities such as the United Nations Staff College and the United Nations Institute for

Training and Research (UNITAR) have significantly enhanced their capacities to engage in partnerships. Partnerships have also increasingly become a major feature of United Nations conferences.

17. The following section highlights some of the recent developments. It is a selective and illustrative presentation of trends and is not intended to capture the entire range of activities under way.

A. World Summit on Sustainable Development

18. Voluntary, non-negotiated partnerships were a key innovation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Over 200 partnerships were launched during the Summit process by a wide variety of stakeholders.

19. Such partnerships have a special character and are specifically linked to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. They are therefore an important part of the follow-up process. Recognizing their possible contribution to the agreed objectives, the Plan of Implementation called upon international institutions to encourage partnership initiatives for implementation by all relevant actors to support the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and subsequently designated the Commission on Sustainable Development as the focal point for discussion on partnerships that promote sustainable development.

20. At its eleventh session in May 2003, the Commission stressed that partnerships in the context of the World Summit process and its follow-up should be developed and implemented in accordance with a set of agreed criteria and guidelines, taking note of the preliminary work undertaken on partnerships during the preparatory process for the Summit, including the Bali Guiding Principles and General Assembly resolution 56/76.

21. At the same session, the Commission agreed that partnerships, which are voluntary initiatives undertaken by stakeholders, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and NGOs, should be new and add concrete value to the implementation process. The economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development should be kept in mind in their design and implementation. Partnerships should be based on predictable and sustained resources, including new resources and, where relevant, should result in transfer of technology to, and capacity-building in, developing countries.

22. The Commission called for a sectoral and geographical balance of partnerships that should be designed and implemented in a transparent and accountable manner. They should be publicly announced and those involved should exchange information with Governments and other stakeholders. The Commission also agreed that the involvement of international institutions and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in partnerships should conform to the agreed mandates arrived at through the intergovernmental process and should not lead to the diversion of resources from mandated programmes.

23. The submission of partnership proposals to the Secretariat is a continuous process. There is no deadline and registration is voluntary. However, it was agreed at the eleventh session that registered partnerships should submit regular reports, preferably on a biennial basis.

24. As part of the monitoring process, the Secretariat has been requested to make information on partnerships available through a database accessible to all interested parties, including through the Commission's web site.

25. The Commission on Sustainable Development, during its biennial review sessions, will discuss the contribution of partnerships to the implementation of the intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development goals and objectives. At its eleventh session, the Commission called for activities that strengthen such partnerships, including partnership fairs (the first such fair was conducted during that session).

B. Financing for development

26. Individual businesses, as well as business organizations, were given the opportunity to be formally accredited to the Financing for Development Preparatory Committee and Conference. During the preparatory process and in the Conference, business representatives made policy proposals for discussion with Governments and international organizations. The proposals were disseminated and discussed in a report and through the organization of an International Business Forum as well as several follow-up dialogues during the Conference in Monterrey. Business leaders interacted with representatives from Governments and international organizations in those "side events" and also participated in the official ministerial and summit round tables in Monterrey.

27. Many of the proposals made by the business community during the Conference and the follow-up process called for specific public/private initiatives.

28. Since Monterrey, business representatives have been discussing those ideas among themselves and with international organizations and Governments. For example, funds have been provided by the Government of Norway for developing a prototype of the Global Clearinghouse and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has sponsored an expert group meeting to discuss risk mitigation techniques for facilitating financing of infrastructure projects in developing countries.

29. In the follow-up to Monterrey, dialogues or "hearings" with business entities and representatives of NGOs were held in March 2003 and are also planned for 28 October 2003 (in preparation for the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in the General Assembly). The Financing for Development Office will also draw on expertise from the business sector, as well as NGOs and academics, in preparing reports requested by the intergovernmental processes in the financing for development follow-up.

C. United Nations Information and Communication Technology Task Force

30. The United Nations Information and Communication Technology Task Force was created by a decision of the Economic and Social Council. It is an intergovernmental body in which non-Government members, representing the private sector and NGOs, have the same decision-making power as those representing Governments. The Council's decision was taken in recognition of the vital contribution that the sector can make towards achieving the Millennium

Development Goals. The Task Force is intended to serve as a strategic tool of the United Nations system and the global community in meeting those goals. It helps in building public-private-civil society partnerships that use information and communication technology to achieve development goals and bridge the global digital divide, and make such technology available to all the world's citizens.

31. The Information and Communication Technology Task Force serves as a catalyst for coordinated actions and, from its very inception, has worked to develop collaboration with major global initiatives and events — such as the G-8 Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force) and its follow-up, the Development Gateway Foundation, the World Economic Forum, the Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC) — and has built close relationships with key multilateral institutions and regional organizations.

32. The Task Force has made innovative use of the modalities of plenary meetings, informal consultations, discussions with stakeholders and electronic outreach to audiences across the world in order to launch a matrix of working groups and regional networks. It has established five working groups that are addressing a broad range of policy issues and have launched several initiatives in the areas of policy and governance, e-strategies, capacity-building, connectivity and access, and entrepreneurship. They are forging strategic partnerships linking the United Nations system organizations, developing countries, private industry and financing trusts and foundations, donors and other relevant stakeholders for collaboration in key priority areas.

D. Global Compact

33. In recent years there has been growing recognition in the international community of the importance of good corporate citizenship, especially for development. By working collectively with other societal actors, the private sector can contribute positively to a range of global problems, making a difference in the lives of the poor. The private sector too is beginning to recognize its responsibility to balance financial priorities with broader societal concerns.

34. The United Nations Global Compact, launched by the Secretary-General in July 2000, was created to fill a perceived void between regulatory structures and existing codes of conduct and standards, and to create a global corporate citizenship platform to imbue markets with universal principles. A voluntary initiative, the Global Compact seeks to advance good corporate citizenship. Companies work with United Nations agencies, Governments, labour and civil society to advance its nine universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour and the environment.

35. From the nearly 50 corporate leaders present at the official launch, the Global Compact had grown, by mid-2003, into an extensive international network encompassing more than 1,000 companies worldwide, several international trade unions and dozens of NGOs, academic institutions and other societal actors. The private-sector participants include large corporations as well as small and medium-scale enterprises, representing virtually all industry sectors on every continent.

36. The Global Compact includes five core United Nations agencies: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; UNEP; the International

Labour Organization; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Many other United Nations entities, including UNCTAD, are associated with the initiative.

37. The Global Compact seeks to integrate its principles into business activities through a range of activities and engagement mechanisms, including dialogue, learning, outreach and projects. At the same time it contributes to development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

38. The Global Compact's Policy Dialogue series has produced dynamic multistakeholder forums in which participants address key issues related to sustainable development and corporate citizenship. As of June 2003, four global policy dialogues had been convened: The Role of the Private Sector in Zones of Conflict (2001); Business and Sustainable Development (2002); HIV/AIDS in the Workplace (2003); and Supply Chain Management and Partnerships (2003). Outcomes have included a "Business Guide to Conflict Impact Assessment and Risk Management"; policy recommendations on transparency; an initiative to develop sustainable business in the world's least developed countries; and an agreement by international employers and labour groups to cooperate in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The most recent Global Compact Policy Dialogue on Supply Chain Management and Partnerships was attended by over 100 companies and a wide range of other stakeholders. Many examples of successful private sector partnerships with the United Nations were presented and key challenges for developing effective partnerships were discussed. The outcomes from the dialogue are reflected in the present report.

39. The Global Compact's Learning Forum stimulates the development and sharing of good practices related to the implementation of the nine principles. Annual Learning Forum meetings enable participants to share their experience in a multistakeholder context. The 2002 annual meeting of the Learning Forum which attracted 200 participants was convened in Berlin. The 2003 annual meeting is scheduled to take place in Brazil in the latter half of the year.

40. One of the key development efforts of the Global Compact relates to country outreach. As of June 2003, the Global Compact had been launched in more than 50 countries worldwide, most in the developing world, effectively creating country-level networks composed of businesses and other societal actors to advance development goals. Such networks serve to facilitate learning, promote and display partnership projects and expand the recruitment of additional companies.

41. The Global Compact has inspired a range of partnership projects on the ground in both developing and developed countries. To build up on that work, in 2003 the Global Compact and UNDP created the Project Partnership Forum, with the aim of creating a better understanding of how to implement partnership projects that involve the United Nations system and business, and to generate partnerships between the private sector, United Nations organizations and other relevant and interested parties.

42. One of the primary challenges facing the least developed countries is their inability to attract significant levels of foreign direct investment. Launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Global Compact's least developed country initiative, coordinated by UNDP, brings companies together with other stakeholders to identify business opportunities in specific countries that will be

sustainable and designed in ways to help local small and medium-scale enterprises. The involvement of such enterprises in that initiative and other Global Compact activities is crucial, as it is estimated that small and medium-scale enterprises worldwide constitute over 90 per cent of business and account for between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of employment. In many developing countries, such enterprises account for most of the employment.

43. Nearly 30 per cent of Global Compact participating companies are classified as small and medium-scale enterprises. The association of the Global Compact with UNIDO, which has the responsibility of overseeing the engagement of small and medium-scale enterprises in the developing world, is of strategic importance. As important players in the global supply chain, many such enterprises are confronting issues related to corporate citizenship, especially as increasing numbers of transnational companies seek supply-chain partners that adhere to social and environmental principles.

E. United Nations Fund for International Partnerships

44. Cooperation between the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) and the United Nations Foundation entered its sixth year in March 2003. As of 31 May 2003, $513 million had been programmed for 253 projects worldwide in four areas: children's health; population and women; environment; and peace, security and human rights. UNFIP continues to solicit joint submissions from United Nations entities to strengthen the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in support of the Secretary-General's ongoing reform efforts.

45. In addition to serving as the interface between the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations system, UNFIP provides advice to the private sector and foundations on partnership options with the United Nations family. That effort also involves suggestions on strategic ways for corporations and foundations to support the Millennium Development Goals and to mobilize additional resources for the United Nations system.

46. UNFIP also helps to develop new relationships with the private sector and other foundations in support of United Nations causes, identifying partners and organizing meetings for United Nations colleagues with companies and foundations to discuss project collaboration, financial and in-kind contributions as well as corporate talent contributions to development projects.

47. UNFIP has established ties with foundation consortiums, including the Council on Foundations, the Foundation Center, the Philanthropy Roundtable, the Global Philanthropy Forum and the European Foundation Centre. In regard to the latter, UNFIP is a member of the Programme Committee, with the primary role of providing counsel to European foundations on United Nations engagement. Alliances have been strengthened with the United States Chamber of Commerce, Africare and the Corporate Council on Africa. UNFIP works closely with the United Nations Association of the United States of America as well as its local chapters and the Business Council for the United Nations, to promote United Nations causes and engage the business community in partnerships. Furthermore, UNFIP provides guidance to organizations that aim to raise funds for United Nations causes.

F. Examples of partnership projects on the ground

48. Partnership projects — as opposed to strategic global partnerships — often involve only one or a limited number of partners, have well-defined goals and are usually time-bound. Many United Nations organizations have over the past couple of years started to experiment more systematically with partnership projects, both at headquarters and, more importantly, in the field. For example, UNDP is engaged in a large number of partnerships on the ground and is coordinating and supporting the Global Compact at the country level in its programme countries. While the scope of the present report does not permit a systematic stocktaking and assessment of such partnerships, a few recent examples are highlighted to illustrate how partnership projects can be implemented in various areas.

49. *Improving education*. A partnership between UNICEF, Itau (the second-largest bank in Brazil) and CENEPEC (a local NGO) focused on raising $2.5 million to advocate issues affecting the education of children and improve the quality of primary education. In 1994, Itau launched an Investment and Capitalization Plan to benefit Brazilian children through UNICEF. Through the alliance, best-practice training materials were developed, produced and distributed to 28,000 public primary schools, regional training sessions were facilitated and a model for after-school activities was developed and implemented. Through the UNICEF-Itau prize on education, more than 1,500 NGO projects applied for the prize and more than 30 were selected and awarded a total of $264,000. The alliance also undertook an advocacy campaign through mass media channels.

50. *Eliminating child labour*. A partnership between UNICEF, Ikea, the World Health Organization and local communities focused on the goal of allocating $450,000 to prevent child labour in the "carpet belt" state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. The project involved working with rural communities to raise awareness of the issue and mobilize them around strategies for preventing child labour. School enrolment drives are conducted and alternative learning centres are established on a needs basis. Through the formation of self-help groups, the project also helps rural women to enhance their economic status by improving access to credit and income-generation opportunities, thus reducing debt burdens. As a result of the project, 24,000 children are now attending school and more than 6,000 women have the opportunity to contribute to the incomes of their families. Based on the success of the project, Ikea and UNICEF decided to enlarge the project to include another 300 villages in the same area, bringing to 500 the total number of villages involved in the project.

51. *Promoting youth issues*. UNICEF, Levi Strauss & Co. and MTV Asia created a partnership to provide an opportunity for young people in Asia to speak out on social issues affecting them. The "Speak Your Mind" campaign formed the basis of an "Asian Youth Charter" presented to the United Nations in New York during the special session of the General Assembly on children. The campaign supported the UNICEF objective of bringing influential media partners into the Global Movement for Children. A total of $270,000 was allocated by Levi Strauss and its Foundation to be used by UNICEF in contracting with MTV Asia for the production of documentaries based on the themes of the youth discussions.

52. *Information technology*. The Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) of UNDP, based in Kuala Lumpur, pioneered a partnership

with Cisco Systems in 1999 that has since expanded to the majority of the world's least developed countries. It is dedicated to creating a workforce with the skills to design, build and maintain computer networks capable of supporting national and global organizations. The Least Developed Country Initiative envisaged Cisco's Networking Academies reaching some of the world's poorest people in half the world's least developed countries by the end of 2001. In two years 3,370 students from least developed countries and 278 instructors have been provided access to industry training in 83 different Cisco Networking Academies. Academies have been established in 33 of the 49 least developed countries.

53. *Empowering local communities*. A partnership involving UNDP, the British Petroleum company and the Government of Indonesia, the Diversified Growth Strategy covers the regions of Kepala Burung and Raja Ampat in the Papuan Province, which will be directly affected by two mega-projects, Tangguh Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Gag Island Nickel (a mining project). It aims to strengthen the local government and population to manage the changes stemming from the large-scale projects and to enable the local communities to absorb their impact in environmentally sound and socially beneficial ways.

54. In China, UNDP recently conducted a social impact assessment in preparation of the construction of the West-East Pipeline to ensure that social and community concerns were taken into consideration and local communities along the pipeline route derive maximum benefit from the project. UNDP collaborated with Shell, the Government, PetroChina, several universities, development institutions and local authorities.

55. *Supporting small business*. In Angola, UNDP has an agreement with Chevron-Texaco to promote sustainable economic and social growth by supporting small business development. The Angola Enterprise Programme, which was established to facilitate the partnership, will promote vocational training, small business incubation, access to credit and job creation for micro and small businesses throughout Angola.

56. *Human rights*. In Venezuela, UNDP, together with the Government, Amnesty International and Statoil, have collaborated to build capacity within the national judiciary system on issues relating to international human rights law. A group of judges and federal prosecutors have received training and will serve as trainers for their colleagues around the country.

57. *Sustainable development*. In the first major public-private partnership in Central and Eastern Europe, UNDP, together with PKN Orlen, Poland's largest oil company, is promoting corporate social responsibility and sustainable development in Plock. Representatives from civil society, business and municipal administrations will investigate ways to stimulate local economic development, improve living conditions and public safety, upgrade the city's technical infrastructure and protect its cultural heritage and environment. UNDP has already assisted over 80 municipalities to harmonize their economic and social development goals with environmental conservation. Such projects have put into practice Agenda 21, the global blueprint for sustainable development, by conducting audits based on the Agenda's guidelines.

58. "*Paperless Committee*". In 2003, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations became the first United Nations committee fully to employ office

automation and information technology to conduct its official work without large volumes of paper documentation. The partnership initiative, spearheaded by the NGO Section in the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, of the Secretariat, is part of an ongoing effort to improve the effectiveness of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and its working methods. The "Paperless Committee" is a partnership involving the business community and academia. A loan from the Hewlett-Packard Corporation is making available the necessary hardware, in the form of 25 laptop computers and wireless connectivity. The human resources needed to set up the programmes and assist Committee members have been provided by the Mumbai Educational Trust of Bombay. When fully operational, the "Paperless Committee" will enable users to have continuous document updates from the Chair and Secretariat, data transfers to make archiving easier, electronic messages, electronic submission of questions simultaneously, note-taking and report-writing and electronic vote-counting. In addition, the use of laptops during the sessions of the Committee will offset, in the long run, the cost of some 160 binders containing approximately 40,000 pages of documentation.

59. *Human rights*. The Regional Representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Nordic-Baltic Region approached Statoil in August 2000 for support within the framework of the Global Compact's first principle (Respect and promotion of human rights).

60. Following several months of contacts and discussion with the United Nations Secretariat, the Statoil-Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Partnership Agreement was signed in Stockholm in May 2001 and the first contribution of NKr 1 million (approximately $137,000) was received shortly thereafter. Statoil is supporting the Office via an annual, renewable, non-earmarked donation and is providing additional contributions in various forms of support at the field level. The Office is cooperating with Statoil through information exchange and transfer of knowledge in countries where the two organizations have operations and on issues of human rights. The Office is also involved in Statoil's annual sustainable development dialogue.

61. The agreement was renewed again both in 2002 and in 2003 with non-earmarked contributions of NKr 1 million ($137,000) each year. Statoil has expanded its support at the country level through direct dialogue between its respective country managers in Azerbaijan and a contribution of $50,000 towards the reconstruction of schools for internally displaced persons. Statoil also donated $180,000 for health and education projects in Angola for the returning refugees and internally displaced persons and another NKr 1 million ($137,000) donation is planned for a multilingual integration education project for 500,000 middle school students in 10,000 schools in the Nordic region.

62. *Eco-efficiency*. As part of its contribution to the Global Compact, the BASF company is investigating the eco-efficiency of several textile dye works in Morocco, together with UNIDO. The UNIDO mandate is to promote sustainable industrialization in association with UNEP. BASF and its partners jointly presented the project at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

63. UNIDO, UNEP and BASF have worked together to develop a software package that uses key technical data to calculate how the eco-efficiency of various

stages in the production process can be improved. In collaboration with staff from the National Cleaner Production Centres, companies can use the software to calculate and compare the costs and environmental impact of their processes. The project demonstrates the successful integration of cutting-edge know-how in technical cooperation projects.

IV. Lessons learned

64. Partnerships are a tool to complement the Organization's efforts to achieve United Nations goals and objectives. Each agency of the system, however, makes its own unique contribution to the universal mosaic. Consequently, the cooperative arrangements that it enters into with non-State actors is determined by its particular mandate, its mode of operations and the immediate objectives it has to achieve as its contribution to the whole. There is no single model for successful partnerships between the United Nations and non-State actors. However, the experience gained from the partnerships that have been developed so far makes it possible to draw some general lessons and suggests that there may be a case for sharing such lessons among the different parts of the United Nations system in an ongoing and systematic way.

65. Entities of the United Nations system have usually entered into partnerships on an individual basis; a universal mould has not been imposed from above. They can be regarded as a grass-roots phenomenon. There has, of necessity, been much experimentation, leading to different experiences, both good and bad. In general, there has been a growth in partnerships during the past two years. There has also been some consolidation and a better understanding of their limits as well as the institutional support structures required to make them effective in helping to achieve United Nations goals.

66. One fundamental lesson that has been learned is that partnerships make an important contribution to organizational renewal. In order to maintain the interest and commitment of all participants, partnerships must prove their worth in a practical manner by the achievement of concrete results. Thus, partnerships are helping to introduce a new results-based, multistakeholder, synergistic operational paradigm that is enhancing the Organization's efficiency and its capacity to achieve its goals.

67. The fact that partnerships must meet the test of the real world is their inherent strength. It ensures that the Organization's resources will be progressively directed towards successful undertakings and thereby contribute to overall productivity and effectiveness. Unlike programmed initiatives, which depend on long-term planning, partnerships are flexible, adjustable and have a built-in methodology for self-correction.

68. Concerted efforts have been made by the Organization to ensure integrity while providing space for innovation. The Secretary-General issued United Nations-business guidelines in July 2000. Those guidelines have provided a platform for United Nations entities to develop their own more specific guidelines. Since the launch of the United Nations-business guidelines, a great deal of practical experience has been gained. Currently, a process of review is under way. Such a process is extremely important in terms of generating lessons that can be used to

update guidelines and ultimately improve the dynamics of partnerships, while securing the Organization's integrity and independence.

69. The need for sharing practical experience has long been recognized. Focal points within United Nations entities that specialize in partnerships have begun to do so. Meetings convened in 1999 and 2001 have reinforced the need and desire for practitioners throughout the United Nations system to share experience. More recently, in the fall of 2002, UNFIP and the Global Compact organized a meeting with representatives from 29 United Nations agencies and departments to discuss the accomplishments, challenges and tasks involved in furthering the Millennium Development Goals through public-private partnerships. Experience was shared, constraints were identified and future actions were discussed. It was agreed that there was a need to increase the integration of partnership-building into all key aspects of United Nations operations, especially at the country level. Innovation, creativity and acceptable risk-taking within the United Nations system should be encouraged, as should the engagement of United Nations officials with the private sector and other non-State actors in foundations, NGOs and professional associations.

70. The next meeting of United Nations system focal points, to be organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is planned for early 2004. A particular focus of this upcoming meeting will be the application of partnership guidelines and practical experience gained.

71. Focal points now play the role of partnership advocates within the system. The focal point meetings have led to many internal collaborative arrangements. Some groups have identified common problems like the need for better leverage of resources and the need for capacity-building, and have worked to find optimal solutions jointly. There is now greater opportunity for learning from each other's experience.

72. The experiences of partnerships thus far have led to a number of more specific lessons learned. These lessons include:

Partnerships require support

73. Success in building partnerships depends on resources for the initial stage and the space and time to experiment. Since the outcomes are difficult to predict, justification for allocating funds for partnership processes is equally difficult. However, a successful partnership can have a far greater impact than a conventional project through increasing the efficiency of all actors and leveraging in private-sector resources.

Partnerships need to make good business sense

74. Resource mobilization and philanthropy are quite distinct from strategic partnerships. In the latter, it is the convergence of interests that defines the common basis for cooperative endeavour. For-profit enterprises are usually not in the business of philanthropy. They need a clear case as to why partnerships in support of United Nations goals make good business sense. They could have many motives for engagement, which could include image-building, safeguarding long-term investments, building future markets, improving the quality of suppliers and contributing to more stable and predictable business environments.

75. Successful fund-raising requires a particular kind of effort, quite different from building effective partnerships, where the motive is not "doing good", but rather "defining common ground for doing the right thing". Hence, different approaches and skills characterize fund-raising, on the one hand, and partnership-building on the other. Distinguishing between the two categories and developing the appropriate approach in each case is an essential element of the learning effort.

Centralization versus decentralization

76. Whether United Nations partnerships should be facilitated in a decentralized (i.e. local) fashion or whether central (i.e. national, regional or international) support structures should be developed depends on the type of partnership in question. Project partnerships usually evolve in a highly decentralized fashion. Local ownership and detailed knowledge of micro-challenges, as well as the capacity to deliver and implement, are the defining features of successful project partnerships. In fact, dozens of partnership projects and, indeed, some of the most successful ones, have evolved bottom-up, often starting as small experiments and eventually growing (or failing) as implementation occurs. Strategic partnerships, however, are often initiated with the help and policy support of the central authority. In contrast, global strategic partnerships presuppose a central sustaining entity, which acts as a governance and resource hub. Such strategic partnerships may gain local ownership and take root, but support of a central authority is critical to their evolution.

The Organization's two roles: framework provider and implementer

77. The most powerful role that the United Nations can play in partnerships is that of framework provider and facilitator. The Organization is ideally placed to promote partnership-building because of its convening power, neutrality, integrity, issue leadership, expertise and ability to motivate non-State actors. Recent experience in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development has shown how such advantages can be used to inspire non-State actors to align their activities with United Nations goals. Specific partnerships to achieve that objective, such as the "Virtual Exhibit"[1], have shown that the Organization can leverage its core advantages.

78. In some situations, particularly in developing countries, the United Nations may have to be involved in partnerships as an implementer. The expertise developed through operational work can help to inform the partnership development process. However, there may also be tensions between the role of a neutral partnership development "broker" and a partner in implementation. United Nations bodies involved in developing partnerships where they are playing both roles should be aware of such potential tensions and should act to address them, where necessary.

Partnerships involve experimentation and risk-taking, and challenge established hierarchical structures

79. Experimentation is vital to the evolution of partnerships. Providing the institutional space in which successful partnerships can grow, while those that fail to meet the challenges are eliminated, thus promoting an evolutionary process, necessitates an open attitude towards experimentation.

80. Partnerships present a challenge to established hierarchical structures. They usually operate horizontally and transcend institutional boundaries. Their

philosophy and practice contrasts with established structures and often clashes with prevailing institutional arrangements. Reconciling the need for operational flexibility with existing organizational hierarchies is a major challenge and an invaluable opportunity for institutional change and renewal. The growth of partnership approaches across many United Nations entities has already brought about significant change. However, the key to successful change is leadership. Providing encouragement to agents of change within United Nations entities, while ensuring integrity, has become an important feature of successful institutional change.

Characteristics of Successful Partnerships

The development of effective partnerships is an art, not a science. Creativity and innovation should be encouraged. Different partnership modalities will suit different objectives and contexts. However, many successful partnerships share the following characteristics:

- A wide range of partners from different stakeholder groups, with complementary competencies
- Shared vision of, and commitment to, partnership objectives and sufficient common interest in meeting such objectives
- A strongly participatory approach, which involves all partners in decision-making processes
- Agreements which set out the roles and responsibilities of all partners and include clear targets
- Honest, open and regular communication both within the partnership and with external stakeholders
- Recognition that different stakeholders have different types of power and/or resources to bring to the table (e.g. economic power, political power, moral credibility, and development know-how) and that all of those resources have an important role to play in delivering the partnership's objectives
- Willingness to innovate and take risks, as well as the willingness of partners to share risks
- Flexibility and openness to changing strategies when problems occur
- Reporting and evaluation mechanisms that ensure transparency and accountability
- Clear linkages between partnership objectives and processes and intergovernmental frameworks
- Strong linkages with local and/or national-level decision-making processes and stakeholders and a commitment to meeting local needs

V. Challenges ahead

81. If the United Nations is to exploit the potential benefits of partnership with non-State actors fully, there is a need for the Organization to take a more systematic approach to promoting their development. Such an approach will need to meet the following challenges:

Ensuring that partnerships support and do not undermine formal intergovernmental processes

82. Some stakeholders have expressed concerns that in focusing on the development of voluntary partnerships, the United Nations could divert attention away from and reduce the pressure on Governments to implement goals. While such fears must be taken seriously, experience has shown that in many cases partnerships can play a key role in facilitating intergovernmental decision-making and in supporting the development and implementation of effective policy at the national level. As the United Nations expands its use of the partnership model, it will be imperative that all parts of the Organization ensure that the partnerships are supportive of, and complementary to, formal United Nations processes and national-level policy-making. It is also important to assess whether partnerships that state that they support United Nations objectives are, in fact making concrete contributions towards implementing those objectives.

Incentives for staff to build partnerships and innovate

83. Since the publication of the Millennium report there has been a strong emphasis on partnerships at the highest level within the United Nations. However, training and capacity-building are important. They should also encourage innovation and risk-taking. The United Nations Staff College in Turin, Italy has already built up considerable expertise and has organized a number of training courses and undertaken pilot initiatives to enhance the capacities of the United Nations system in dealing with the private sector. Further strengthening the Staff College in that area could foster positive institutional change.

Creating robust and inclusive approaches to partnership assessment

84. Transparency and accountability are important for all United Nations partnerships with non-State actors. Apart from internal integrity measures there is a need to assess and identify methodologies for best practices. Methodologies for assessments should be participative and involve both the organizations concerned and wider groups of stakeholders interested in the issues being addressed. United Nations processes for assessing partnerships should also be linked to decision-making about whether to maintain or abandon partnerships that are failing to deliver on their objectives.

Sharing lessons learned and identifying best practices

85. A body of knowledge about successful partnership processes is already developing within many parts of the United Nations. However, there needs to be a stronger focus on disseminating that knowledge throughout the United Nations system. Active (e.g. meetings-based) and passive (e.g. web-based) strategies need to

be developed. United Nations-system focal-point meetings should be held on a more regular basis.

Developing skills for brokering and facilitating partnerships

86. Effective facilitation can play a key role in the development of successful partnerships. While the United Nations already has some experience in brokering and facilitating partnerships, there is a need to develop those skills more systematically throughout the Organization. Training should draw on the lessons learned by successful United Nations partnerships and should seek to professionalize partnership-building skills. Arguably, it would be a good idea to create specialist teams of facilitators and/or brokers as a resource available to all parts of the United Nations system. Incentives for offices to initiate partnerships should also be created.

Providing funding and other resources for partnership processes

87. Partnership development is a resource-intensive process. Partnership processes are also more risky than conventional projects, as their outcomes are less predictable. If the potential of partnerships is to be fully exploited, the United Nations will need to take the risk of committing time and money to partnership development processes. It may be desirable for some parts of the United Nations system to support partnership development.

Creating strategic partnerships that scale up and/or replicate best practice

88. Many of the partnerships that have been developed by the United Nations have had a relatively narrow focus on one type of activity. While such projects have often been extremely effective within their remit, if the full potential of the partnership model is to be exploited, the United Nations will need to focus on *strategic partnerships*, which by working simultaneously on different types of activity (e.g. supporting the development of effective policy frameworks, using public funds to leverage private investment and using private sector and civil society know-how to deliver new approaches to operational delivery), are able to scale up their impact and create far broader and more sustainable progress towards meeting the Organization's goals.

The role of Governments

89. In addition, if the maximum benefit is to be derived from the opportunities offered by partnerships, Governments will also have to address new challenges. National Governments are key partners in many existing United Nations partnerships and have the capacity to act as framework providers for their own partnerships, both nationally and internationally. In order to exploit the potential of both Organization-led and their own partnerships fully, Governments will also need to:

- Develop partnership-brokering skills
- Provide incentives for the development of partnerships
- Encourage experimentation and innovation
- Provide seed funding for innovative and promising approaches

90. Governments can also play an important role in encouraging responsible global corporate citizenship, which should lead more companies to become involved in partnerships. They are also well placed to devise effective means of linking partnerships to intergovernmental frameworks and for helping to foster the systems of accountability that will be needed to strengthen the legitimacy of partnerships.

VI. Conclusion

91. **Partnerships with non-State actors play a growing role in the work of the Organization. United Nations entities have built up expertise and capacities and have learned how to work with non-State actors in support of United Nations goals. Recently, United Nations conferences have given further impetus to the growth of partnerships, in terms of both project partnerships on the ground and strategic global partnerships. Partnerships play a particularly important role with respect to the implementation of commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits, and to working towards the Millennium Development Goals. Partnerships also facilitate institutional change and help the Organization learn how to become more effective. Strategic global partnerships around responsible corporate citizenship offer the additional opportunity to combine advocacy of universal values with renewed efforts for practical solution-finding.**

92. **However, in order to exploit fully the potential contribution that partnerships can make to the Organization's work, there is a need to implement a more coherent and systematic approach to developing and supporting partnerships across the United Nations system. Such an approach should be geared towards helping the Organization respond to the challenges, including the need to provide stronger incentives for the development of partnerships, to share best practices more systematically, to develop a stronger partnership-brokering skill-base, to create more robust processes for partnership-reporting and accountability, and identifying and disseminating best practices and developing generic partnership tools and guidelines.**

93. **Given that many different parts of the United Nations system are involved, promoting a common approach to partnerships will require additional efforts regarding internal consultation and coordination. The Partnership Office, which will bring under one umbrella the Global Compact Office and UNFIP, will be well placed to build on lessons learned thus far, as well as to enhance quality assurance and provide a more solid institutional framework in support of new and promising initiatives. The Partnership Office will also identify the most promising strategies for ensuring that the United Nations takes a more systematic and coordinated approach to developing effective cooperation with non-State actors. In addition, it could be tasked with considering the important political issues raised by the Organization's increased use of partnership approaches as a modality for delivering its goals. That will allow the extensive expertise in partnership-building that has been developed across the United Nations system to be put to work in developing a systematic and effective framework that can then be used to help find the most effective solutions to the pressing priority goals at hand.**

Notes

[1] See www.virtualexhibit.net.